



**LOS ANGELES -TO-SAN DIEGO
PROPOSED RAIL CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT STUDIES**

**LOSSAN Corridor
Strategic Plan-Executive Summary**

October 2003



Prepared for:

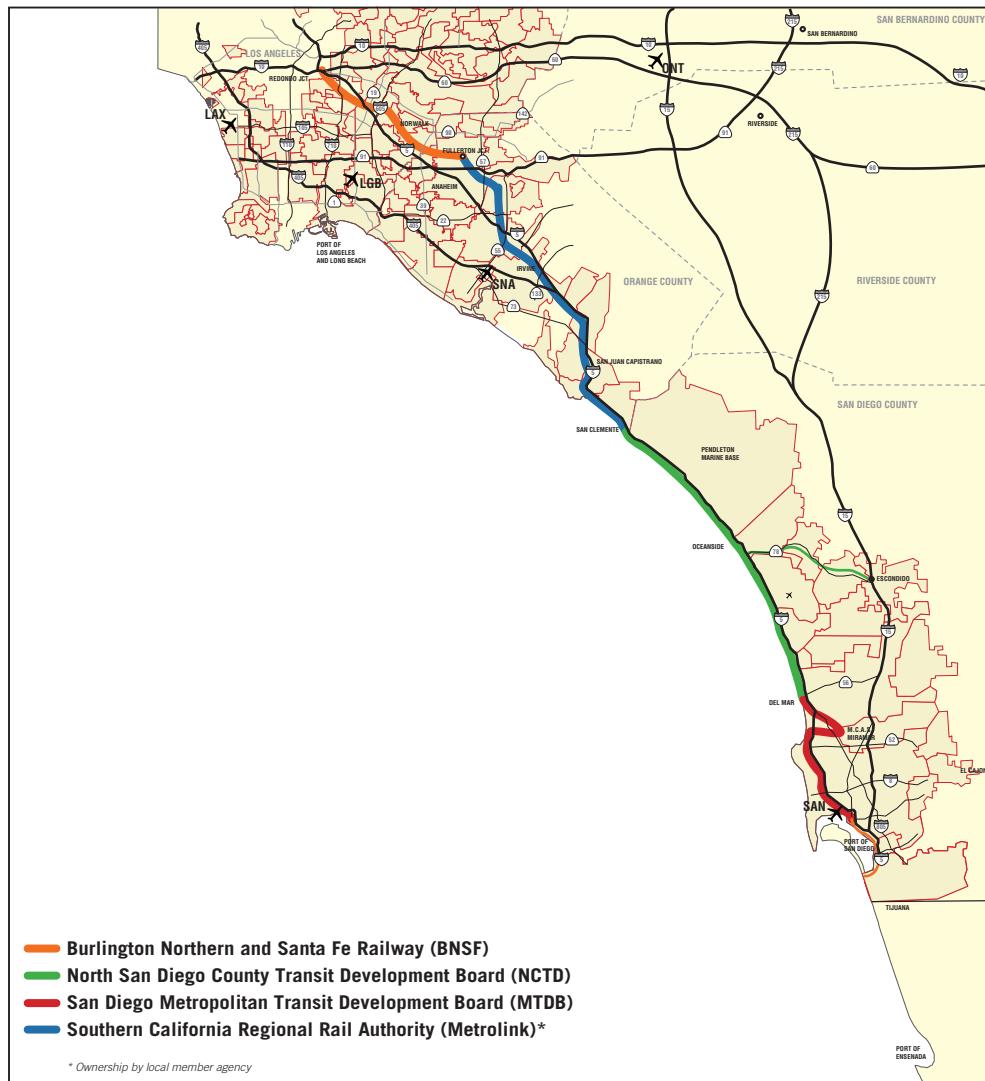


**California Department of
Transportation**



**U.S. Department of
Transportation Federal
Railroad Administration**

LOSSAN Rail Corridor Strategic Plan



LOSSAN Rail Corridor, between Los Angeles Union Station and San Diego Santa Fe Depot

APPROVAL RECOMMENDED BY:	APPROVAL BY:	APPROVED BY:
Original signed by William D. Bronte Chief, Office of Rail Services	Original signed by Warren Weber Chief, Division of Rail	Original signed by Brian J. Smith Deputy Director, Planning and Modal Programs
APPROVED BY:	APPROVED BY:	APPROVED BY:
Original signed by Douglas R. Failing District Director District 7	Original signed by Pedro Orso-Delgado District Director District 11	Original signed by Cindy Quon District Director District 12

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The LOSSAN (Los Angeles to San Diego and San Luis Obispo) Rail Corridor is one of the busiest, most important rail lines in the United States, and serves a vital function in providing intercity and commuter rail services within and between cities in California's most populous counties. The area of the LOSSAN corridor studied in the Department's Proposed Rail Corridor Improvement Studies and this document, however, is that portion of the corridor between Los Angeles Union Station and San Diego Santa Fe Depot; hereafter, use of the term "LOSSAN" will refer to that segment only.

The California Department of Transportation (the Department) has determined that the creation of a Strategic Plan is a useful step in its ongoing Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (PEIR/PEIS) process for studying conventional rail improvements for the LOSSAN corridor. This complementary planning document looks at the proposed rail improvements from a corridor-wide perspective. In supporting the PEIR/PEIS work underway, the Strategic Plan's objectives are:

- To provide an additional opportunity for public outreach, beyond that provided as part of the PEIR/EIS process.
- To foster better communication and understanding among stakeholders at all levels.
- To provide an opportunity to screen out design options at key locations, so as to focus future work on the most promising alternatives.
- To develop short and long-term visions for the corridor, contemplating a program of projects for the next twenty years.

The Strategic Plan met these objectives through a series of public workshops held in cities along the corridor. Five Public Workshops were held. The workshops provided the public with an overview of the corridor and the rail improvements under study, including information on:

- The purpose and goals of the Strategic Plan.
- The need for improvements to the corridor.
- Current and projected weekday train volumes.
- Corridor facts, including rail owners and operators and details on Freight services.
- Types of services provided (Intercity Rail, Commuter Rail, and Freight).
- The Strategic Plan timetable.
- Ranges of costs, rail performance issues, and community/environmental issues of projects throughout the corridor.
- Design options and alternatives at four key locations along the corridor where the range of options was sufficiently broad to allow the screening out of some options, the recommendations for screening, and the rationale and criteria used to reach the recommended screening decisions.

- The Planning Process, including timelines for the completion of the Strategic Plan and the Department's Draft Program-level Environmental Impact Reports/Environmental Impact Statement.

In addition to the public workshops, meetings were held with:

- Elected representatives and staff of corridor cities.
- Working groups, consisting of transportation agencies and other stakeholders.
- Resource agencies at the state and federal level.
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)¹.
- California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority)².

These meetings helped to foster a collective sense of understanding regarding the corridor, its current and future needs, and how the proposed improvements could not only meet train service and performance goals, but could offer solutions to long-standing issues of community and environmental concern.

Through the consultative process used in the development of the Strategic Plan, new alternatives were presented by the South Orange County Rail Working Group, leading to possible design options.

Screening of design options at key locations: Del Mar, Encinitas, San Clemente/Dana Point, and San Juan Capistrano – as well as evaluation of whether or not to conduct an Inland Bypass Alternative Study – are other products of this Strategic Plan process.

Recommendations from the screening process include:

- In Del Mar, eliminate the option of double-tracking in the existing corridor along the Coastal Bluffs, and continue to evaluate relocating the rail corridor into one of two tunnel options.
- In Encinitas, eliminate the option of lowering the existing alignment into a long trench throughout the length of the city, and continue to evaluate either at-grade double-tracking with grade separations at major intersections, or constructing a short trench that would provide the same benefits as a long trench at a greatly reduced cost.
- In San Clemente, eliminate options of double-tracking in the existing rail corridor along the beach, and continue evaluating relocation of the rail lines from beaches and the city's Pier Bowl area into a tunnel.
- In San Juan Capistrano, eliminate the option of double-tracking in the existing rail alignment located close to significant community and historical resources, and continue evaluating both an at-grade/trench option and a tunnel option.

¹ The Federal Railroad Administration is the federal lead agency for both the Department and Authority's Program EIR/EIS processes. FRA is also involved in administering federal funding to and supporting the development of policy regarding the nation's existing intercity passenger rail systems.

² The Authority is partnering with the Department in its examination of the LOSSAN corridor. The Authority is in the final process of developing an EIR/EIS for its statewide high-speed rail system. While this electrified, grade-separated system might run as far south as either Anaheim or Irvine, the corridor is important to the Authority in its role as a feeder network to the statewide system, and the improvements proposed would strengthen the corridor's ability to serve that role.

- Eliminate from further consideration an Inland Bypass Alternative in South Orange County, due to fundamental concerns regarding constructability, and severe impacts to the environment, cost, system performance and operations.

Finally, the Strategic Plan provides the opportunity to discuss how to address future infrastructure and service needs within the corridor through a program of projects that could be phased over time. The Strategic Plan, through its evaluation of the relative merits of each project area along the corridor – the costs, benefits, and any potential issues and impacts – has created this program of projects.

The Strategic Plan is a tool that can be used by policymakers to identify and prioritize the order in which rail improvement projects should (subject to availability of funding) move to the next steps of:

- Identifying and programming projects for future funding, and securing local or regional matching funds.
- Securing project-specific environmental clearance.
- Performing preliminary engineering.
- Completing the project's final design.
- Obtaining the necessary permits, and.
- Constructing the corridor improvements.

As part of the information gathered in the Strategic Plan, a draft timeline and schedule for the recommended rail improvement projects was created. This draft timeline is the result of collaboration with the public, cities along the corridor, transportation agencies and rail operators, as well as the Department, the Authority, and FRA. The result is a “plan of action” for improvements to the LOSSAN corridor over the short term (three years), the medium-term (4-6 years), and the long-term (7 years and beyond) following the release of the Program-level EIR/EIS. As well, a listing of the projects, their relative costs, the impacts and benefits to train performance, and community and environmental issues associated with each was created, and is included as **Exhibit Executive Summary 1** (following page).

The Strategic Plan process has yielded an important benefit to the PEIR/PEIS process, saving time, energy and resources, advancing the timeline for completion of the environmental review process, and creating a document which will be useful not only as a planning tool, but one which can be used by Planning Agencies in making funding applications and in making programming decisions regarding rail projects in their respective areas.

PROJECT	COST (\$ MILLIONS)	PERFORMANCE INCREASE	COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	PHASEABILITY
RUN-THROUGH TRACKS AT UNION STATION	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH <1 MI 1 <1 MI	FEWER • PROPERTY ACQUISITION • CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS	GREATER
FOUR TRACKS COMMERCE TO FULLERTON	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 20 MI 0 0 MI	FEWER • PROPERTY ACQUISITION • CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS	GREATER
CURVE STRAIGHTENING, INCLUDING PARTIAL OR FULL GRADE-SEPARATION	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 0 MI -1 0 MI	FEWER • CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS	GREATER
DOUBLE-TRACKING VIA • tunnel along I-5, or • tunnel along Trabuco Creek	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 4-5 MI -3 +0.5 MI	FEWER • COMMUNITY COMPATIBILITY • NOISE AND VIBRATION	GREATER
DOUBLE-TRACKING VIA • 5-mile tunnel along I-5 • 10-mile split tunnel along I-5 • includes curve-straightening at Dana Point	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 8-10 MI -1 -0.5+2.5 MI	FEWER • COASTAL RESOURCES AND ACCESS • NATURAL HABITAT	GREATER
DOUBLE TRACKING ALONG EXISTING ALIGNMENT	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 6 MI 0 0 MI	FEWER • PROTECTED HABITAT	GREATER
DOUBLE TRACKING ALONG EXISTING ALIGNMENT, INCLUDING PARTIAL OR FULL GRADE-SEPARATION	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 5 MI -1 0 MI	FEWER • TRAFFIC/PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION	GREATER
DOUBLE TRACKING ALONG EXISTING ALIGNMENT, INCLUDING PARTIAL OR FULL GRADE-SEPARATION	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 7 MI 0 0 MI	FEWER • TRAFFIC/PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION • COASTAL ACCESS	GREATER
DOUBLE-TRACKING VIA • tunnel along Camino Del Mar • tunnel avoiding Penasquitos lagoon	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 5 MI -1 0 MI	FEWER • COMMUNITY IMPACTS • PROPERTY IMPACTS	GREATER
DOUBLE-TRACKING AND CURVE STRAIGHTENING VIA • tunnel under University City (including new station) • tunnel under I-5	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 3-4 MI -12 -3.5-5 MI	FEWER • TUNNELING UNDER PRIVATE PROPERTY	GREATER
DOUBLE-TRACKING AND CURVE STRAIGHTENING INCLUDES PARTIAL OR FULL GRADE SEPARATION	\$ \$\$\$	MODERATE HIGH 3 MI -4 0 MI	FEWER • CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS	GREATER

Legend

- Los Angeles to San Diego Rail Corridor
- Intercity Station
- Proposed Station for Further Study
- Additional Miles of Double Track
- Number of Curves Eliminated
- Impact on Length of Corridor

- Phaseable
- Less Phaseable
- Not Phaseable